[2.]

THE CASE OF THE Crols in Baptiſm CONSIDERED.

Wherein is Shewed,

That there is nothing in it, as it is uſed in the *Church of England*, that can be any juſt Reaſon of Separation from it.

Galat. VI. 14. *God forbid that I ſhould glory, ſave in the Croſs of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

LONDON,

Printed for *Fincham Gardiner*, at the *White-Horſe* in *Ludgate-ſtreet*. 1684.

THE CASE OF THE CROSS IN Baptiſm, &c.

THE Matters in Diſpute betwixt Us and our Diſſenting Brethren, may generally ſeem to the unconcern'd ſtander by, of ſo ſlight and Inconſiderable Moment, that he muſt needs wonder how in the World the Controverſie ſhould come to have ariſen to that Deplorable height, which in this laſt Age it hath done. And although the *Caſe* which will fall under our preſent Debate, ſeems to have admitted of the moſt ſpecious ſcruples and given the beſt ſcope of reaſoning, of any other thing that hath fallen under queſtion amongſt us ſince the Reformation; yet even here alſo, the *Immeaſurable Byaſs* of Prejudice, and Fervency of Oppoſition, hath too apparently manag'd the Argument. So that the Pleas againſt it have not ſeem'd ſo

'Αμετρία αὐθαδείας.

weighty as they have been *numerous*, as if the Objectors had an Eye to that direction in *Quintilian*, they would be sure *to amass all the weaker Arguments, which though weak in themselves, yet by standing together may lend a Mutual assistance to one another*; like Articles of Impeachment, none of which singly would perhaps affect the accus'd Person, but all together may amount to accumulative Treason.

L. 5. c. 20. *Infirmiora Argumenta Congreganda sunt, imbecilla enim natura à, mutuo auxilio sustinentur.*

My business therefore in handling this *Case*, shall not be to follow every nice Scruple, or trivial Objection (as where the *Cross* in *Baptism* hath been charg'd with the breach of every particular Precept in the Decalogue) not to concern my self in any thing, which either by long Induction of consequences hath been far fetcht, or with great difficulty drawn in, to make a show of Argument, but, as briefly and plainly as may be to sum up all that hath ever seem'd of any Moment in this matter, and that under this twofold Head.

I. That the Sign of the *Cross* hath been so notoriously abus'd to the worst purposes of Superstition and Idolatry in the *Church of Rome*; that the retaining of it still amongst us, makes us partakers of the Superstitions and Idolatry of *that Church*.

II. That it seem's the introducing of a *New Sacrament*, which having not the warranty of our Lord and Master *Christ Jesus*, must needs be a very Offensive invasion of *his* Rights, whose Royal Prerogative alone it is to institute what *Sacraments* he pleaseth in *his* Church.

Under these two Heads I think may be fairly comprehended all those Objections *our Brethren* have offer'd against the Sign of the *Cross in Baptism*, at least all those that are any thing Material. Insomuch that if the difficulty of these could be remov'd, we might fairly hope, none of the Sober and Conscientious Dissenters, but would

would think themſelves oblig'd to ſubmit to the uſe of it, rather than maintain the Separation upon this account.

And this ſhall be endeavour'd with all the Candor and Clearneſs that becomes the deſign of this, and the reſt of thoſe Diſcourſes that have been Publiſht of this kind, *viz.* to Convince and not Reproach or Provoke any: to Effect (if poſſible) the happy agreement, and conſequently enlarge and ſtrengthen the intereſts of good Men. And for this purpoſe I have thought fit not to quote the writings of particular Perſons, but rather to repreſent the Objection, as what is in general avow'd and agreed upon by the whole Party.

And although it is not likely that any thing ſhould be *here* offer'd, that hath not been already with great Learning and Integrity made uſe of, by the many aſſertors of *our Church*; yet perhaps, the bringing this under one view, without the *Warmth* or *Salt* of an Adverſary may not prove altogether Vain and Ineffectual.

I. I begin therefore, with the firſt Objection, *viz. That the Sign of the Croſs hath been ſo notoriouſly abus'd to the worſt purpoſes of Superſtition and Idolatry in the* Church of Rome, *that the retaining of it ſtill amongſt us, makes us Partakers of the Superſtitions and Idolatry of that* Church.

I muſt readily acknowledg that the Material Figure of the *Croſs* hath been indeed abus'd to very *Idolatrous* purpoſes in the *Church of Rome*, and even the aereal Sign of it to Purpoſes ſuperſtitious and ridiculous enough, and if what we do in uſing this Sign in Baptiſm, were really chargeable with *Popery*, it would be a ſufficient reaſon to deteſt and Reject it. The Objection therefore at the firſt view looks plauſibly enough, when it thus chargeth this Ceremony of the *Croſs*; Paganiſm it ſelf being hard-

ly more Odious, nor in Truth (for ſome very good Reaſons amongſt wiſe Men,) more Ridiculous and Intolerable. There is ſcarce any part of *Popery*, properly ſo called, but is ſo plain a dpravation of Chriſtianity it ſelf, ſuch a contradiction to the Rules, ſuch a defeat to the great purpoſes and ends of our *Holy Religion*, that it deſerves well enough the good Mans Juſteſt abhorrency, which he may reaſonably expreſs, when he finds himſelf in any real danger of the Snare. But then, we muſt conſider, how eaſie and natural a thing it is for Perſons (that otherwiſe mean honeſtly euough) to humour a Juſt and Reaſonable Offence againſt *Popery*, into groundleſs Suſpicions upon things which have no ſuch Tendency at all in them: And upon theſe firſt Suſpicions not only to ſtartle, and grow alittle ſhy and nice, but to determine themſelves in reſolv'd & unmoveable Prejudices, that have had Effects ill enough. For upon this, deſigning Men have made their advantage upon every trifling occaſion, giving out the word, and laying the charge of *Popery*, upon what it hath been their humour or intereſt to deſire a change in. And this probably we ſhall find to have happen'd in this *Caſe* in hand. The accuſation hath been drawn againſt it that it is very *Popiſh*, and the Prejudices which this Accuſation hath begot in ſome honeſt Minds, are ſo ſtrong that they ſeem invincible. How unreaſonably therefore this charge is laid againſt our uſe of the *Sign of the Croſs* in Baptiſm may appear when we have conſidered theſe three things.

I. That the uſe of this Sign was much more ancient, than the firſt Corruption and Depravation of the *Church of Rome*.

II. That the uſe of it, as it is ordain'd and appointed in our *Church*, hath not the leaſt affinity with the uſe of it, as it is in the *Romiſh* Rituals.

III. Laſt.

III. Laſt. Although it cannot be deny'd but the *Church of Rome* hath greatly abus'd this Ceremony to very ill purpoſes of Superſtition, yet doth not this make it unlawful to continue the Reform'd uſe of it ſtill amongſt us that have profeſſedly ſeparated from the Corruptions of *that Church*.

I. Conſider we that the uſe of this Sign of the *Croſs* was much more ancient than the firſt Corruption and Depravation of the *Church of Rome*. When I ſpeak of the *firſt Corruption and Depravation* of the Church of *Rome*, I would be underſtood as to thoſe things that have put *that Church* under the Imputation of what we now call *Popery*. For that there were ſome deprav'd Cuſtoms crept into the Church in general (and ſo that of *Rome* perhaps as well as any other) in very early days, is Evident from what St. *Paul* Rebukes in the Church of *Corinth*, and from what our Saviour himſelf in his *Revelations* to St. *John*, Condemns in the Seven Churches of *Aſia*. So that, when I ſay the uſe of the *Croſs* was more ancient than the firſt Corruption and Depravation of the *Church of Rome*, I mean, more ancient than any of thoſe Corruptions in her by the reaſon of which, we have juſtly eſteem'd her an *Apoſtatiz'd Church*, more ancient than either the Introduction of Images, their Multiplication of Sacraments, their pretentions to Supremacy and Infallibility, or any of thoſe Superſtitious Rites in Worſhip, by which we diſtinguiſh *that Church* as *Popiſh*, and brand it as falſe and *Antichriſtian*.

As to this therefore, I know none of our Diſſenting Brethren, however for a ſhift in Argument they may talk of the *Myſtery of Iniquity* beginning to work betimes, and in the firſt Ages of the Church *, that yet do profeſſedly charge any *Signal* Apoſtaſy upon the *Church of Rome*, at leaſt for the firſt four hundred Years after Chriſt: not

* *By which Phraſe the Apoſtle in Truth meant, the Secret workings of the* Hæreticks *of* that *Age.*

to

to the Age wherein St. *Austin* Flourisht; but that it was a Church that might be Communicated with at that time, notwithstanding *that* Father complain'd of the Superfætation of Ceremonies even then, which (at least for the Number of them) began to be very burdensom. And yet, for an Hundred or two of Years before this, we find in the Writings of *Tertullian* such mention of the use of *this* Sign, that makes it very plain, it had been a Customary thing long before his time also, and probably, even amongst those of the Apostolical Age it self. There are those indeed that would make that Father the first that brought in the use of this Ceremony into the Church, having receiv'd it from the *Montanists* of whom he seems to have been particularly fond. But the frequent and familiar mention he makes of the Sign of the Cross in many of his Books renders this Conjecture very improbable. *Tertullian* tells us it was grown so much in use in his time, that *upon every motion of theirs*, at their *going out and coming in, when they put on their Garments or Shooes, at the Bath, or at Meals when they lighted up their Candles, or went to Bed, whatever almost they did in any part of their Conversation, still they would even wear out their Foreheads with the Sign of the Cross*; which though he confesseth there was no express Law of Christ that had enjoyn'd it, yet *Tradition had Introduc'd, Custom had Confirm'd, and the Believers Faith had observ'd and maintain'd it.*

Frontem crucis signaculo terere. Tertul. *de Coron. mil.*

This doth not look as if it had been a thing newly invented by *Montanus*, and brought into the Church by *Tertullian*, as being himself too great a Favourer of that Sect. Although, were it thus indeed, yet this sheweth that the Practice of it was receiv'd among the Faithful, some Ages before the Depravation and Apostacy of the *Romish Church*. But he is not our single Author in this mat-

matter: for, *Origen* who Flouriſht not much above CC Years after Chriſt, and not XL Years after *Tertullian*, makes mention of thoſe who upon their Admiſſion into the Church by Baptiſm, *were Sign'd with this Sign.* And St. *Baſil* not much above one Hundred Years after him, gives this uſage the Venerable Title of *an Eccleſiaſtical Conſtitution*, or *fixt Law of the Church, that had prevail'd from the Apoſtles Days, that thoſe who believed in the Name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ſhould be Signed with the Sign of the Croſs.*

Homil. 2. *in Pſalm.* 38.

Baſil. de Spir. Sanct. cap. 27.

But of all the Fathers, St. *Cyprian*, who was before St. *Baſil*, and very near if not contemporary with *Tertullian* himſelf, not only ſpeaks moſt Familiarly of the uſe of this Sign, but hath ſome Expreſſions in this matter, that would ſeem very harſh and unwarrantable now; and yet, the Authority of that Father, hath ſav'd him hitherto from being brought under queſtion about it. He tells us in one place, that in *fronte cruce ſignantur, qui Dominum promerentur*, i.e. *they are Sign'd in the Forehead with the Croſs who are thought worthy of the Lord*, and in another place, *Omnia ſacramenta peragit, it Compleats every Sacrament*, and *per crucem baptiſma ſanctificatur*, *Baptiſm is Sanctified by the Croſs.* I will not ſtand accountable for the Juſtifiableneſs of theſe paſſages, were they to be allow'd no kind of Latitude: but, as to the purpoſe for which they are cited they ſeem pertinent enough: that is, to Argue the antiquity of this uſage (and that in the Sacrament of Baptiſm too) the Phraſe ſo frequently occurring in the writings of thoſe ancient Fathers, that *fronte ſignati, being ſign'd in the Forehead*, ſeems a known and uſual *Periphraſis* for being enter'd into the Faith of Chriſt and the Body of his Church by Baptiſm.

After all which, what need I Inſtance in St. *Cyril*, St. *Am-*

Ambroſe, or St. *Auſtin*? Who ſprinkle their writings with the Common mention of this Ceremony, and oftentimes frame Arguments of the Obligation upon Chriſtians to live as becomes them, from this very badg they wear upon their Foreheads. St. *Auſtin* wittily enough glorying in the *Confidence* of a Chriſtian as to a *Crucifi'd Saviour*, that he willingly imprints the Sign of it upon that part of himſelf *which is the proper ſeat of Bluſhing.*

Nec nos pudet Crucifixi, ſed ubi pudoris ſignum eſt, crucis ejus ſignum habemus. Auguſt. in Galat. 6. 14.

I ſhall only add this remark further, that after the time wherein this Cuſtom had been ſo Univerſally receiv'd into the Chriſtian Church, and ſome of the Fathers had ſo liberally expreſt themſelves in it, we may obſerve that the firſt Chriſtian Emperour, *Conſtantine the Great*, had his Directions probably from heaven it ſelf to make this Sign, the great Banner in his Wars, with this Additional encouragement, that *by this he ſhould overcome.* That this *Dream* or *Viſion* (call it which we will, for Hiſtories mention it differently) was from Heaven, and a thing of great reality, is Evident, from the ſucceſs of that Princes Arms under it.

Τούτῳ νίκα.

The Authors of the *Centuries* allow a conſiderable Signification in that Sign as given him from Heaven, as the future Standard he ſhould fight under, *viz, that God had admoniſht him by that Sign of the Croſs, and the Motto added to it*, by this thou ſhalt overcome, *concerning the Knowledg and Worſhip of the true God, and of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in Memorial of which he took care to have it Painted on his Banner, that it might be as the Symbol of the Chriſtian Religion.*

Cent. 4. *cap.* 13.

Now we would not ſuppoſe that our Bleſſed Lord would by ſo immediate a Revelation from Heaven, Countenance ſuch a Rite as this, already receiv'd and made uſe of in the Church, giving it to *Conſtantine* both as a Symbol of his Profeſſion, and Pledg of his future Victories, if he had reſented it before as Superſtitious or

any

any way unwarrantable. This kind of Standard the *Roman* Emperours successively had born before them in their Warrs: nay, it is recorded that *Julian* himself (probably from what he had made some former Observations of,) could not forbear defending himself with this Sign, upon a mighty fright he was seiz'd with, while in the use of Magick Arts he went to have consulted with the Devil. This *Nazianzen* calls his *craving aid and refuge of him whom he had Persecuted.* Which, (by the way) might give us the modestly and caution of showing our selves too petulant against what it hath pleas'd our Lord Jesus in a Revelation from Heaven to give the Figure of, and the Holy Spirit also to signalize sometimes by very renown'd miracles, which those that consult Ecclesiastical Histories of best Authority cannot but be convinc'd of.

Theodoret. Hist. l. 3. c. 3.

Orat. Cont. Julian.

So that, we find the use of it very ancient, and the Effects of it very Memorable, *Casaubon* himself (no very fond Man of Rituals) calls it *Primitivæ Ecclesiæ Symbolum ejus fiduciæ quam in Christo & cruce ipsius, & passione ponebant: a Symbol the Primitive Church used to denote that Confidence they had in Christ, his Cross, and Passion.*

Exercit. in Baronium.

I confess it would be a fond thing to endeavour, with some of the *Romish Church*, to trace up the Antiquity of the Cross, to the first Creation of Man, and so all along downward to the Actual Death of our Blessed Lord. *They* can spy out the Cross, in the Figure of a Man's Face, by the placing of the *Nose betwixt the two Eyes*, and much more in the *Position of the whole Body of the Man with his Arms extended.* They can discern it *in the Sword in Paradise*, and in *the Cross stick that Noah's Dove brought back into the Ark*, &c.

See the notes of Laur. le bar upon Tertul. adverss. Marcion. l. 3. p. 178, 179.

And indeed some of the Fathers bend their Imaginations somthing that way, and would fancy the Figure of

the Cross in *Moses* his stretching out his Arms whiles the Israelites were fighting with *Amalek*, in the *Paschal Lamb when the Spit went through it*, &c. which, however they were conceipts too much suiting that way of allegorizing that some of them were fond of, yet doth it at least confirm what I am now upon, I mean the ancient Reception of this Sign into the Primitive Church. Nay, I may further add, that in some of the passages they have of this kind, the hint they take may not deserve perhaps to be absolutely exploded, as if there were no weight or moment at all in it. I will crave leave to instance particularly in one thing which some of the Fathers do a little insist upon, and that is, that *Mark* in *Ezek.* 9. 4. that was *to be set upon the Foreheads of the Men that sigh*, &c.

This *Mark* in several of the ancient Versions is suppos'd to be the *Hebrew Tau*, which St. *Hierom* tells us was, in the Samaritan Character, like our T, and so made the figure of the *Cross*, from whence he Collects that this was *signum crucis quæ in Christianorum frontibus pingitur, a token of that Cross that is imprinted upon the Forehead of the Christian.* If St. *Hierom* be not mistaken in the Samaritan Character, his conjecture in the Application of it, is not very unjustifiable; because, as *all the promises are in Christ Jesus, yea, and in him Amen* : So, all the Prophesies of old, where they concern'd any signal advantages or deliverances to the Jewish Church had the assurance of them frequently confirm'd by some hint or Remembrance of the *Messiah*, that was afterward to be reveal'd. Thus in that Confirmation that *Isaiah* was to give to *Ahaz* of his present deliverance from the Invasions of *Ephraim* and *Syria*, he gives him this Sign, *behold a Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son.* How could that great Event that was not to come to pass of so many Ages after *Ahaz* his Death, affect him, who stood in need

2 Cor. 1. 20.

Isai. 7. 4.

of

of ſo immediate Deliverance, but that it was brought in as an inſtance, (not only that as God could bring about ſuch a wonder, as the Birth of a Child from a Virgin, could as eaſily relieve *Judah* in its preſent ſtreights: but further,) he that had ſo gracious a deſign toward them, as to ſend the *Meſſiah* amongſt them, would in the Proſpect he had to that, ſhow now his particular regards for the Church at this time. In Analogy to this, might this paſſage in *Ezekiel*, look toward that mark which Chriſtians in after Ages ſhould wear upon their Foreheads, as a preſent Symbol of the eſcape of thoſe that ſhould be found *ſighing for the Abominations that were then done in Iſrael.* And to this probably, may that *Seal of the living God* have ſome Reference, which was *to be ſet upon the Foreheads of the Servants of God.* Revel. 7. 2, 3. For, as they are there reckon'd up by the number of *twelve times twelve*, to ſignifie that they are the true and genuine off-ſpring of the twelve Apoſtles; ſo, the *Seal of the Living God upon their Foreheads*, may point at the Figure of the Croſs, to betoken them (though under the Prophetick Denomination of the *Jewiſh Tribes*) to be of the *Chriſtian Church.* This I would not be ſuppos'd to lay any great ſtreſs of Argument upon, only offer the Conjecture to the Candor of the Reader. *Vid. Med. in loc.*

And thus, having ſhewen the Antiquity of *this Sign*, as it was receiv'd into the Church long before the Corruptions of *Popery* appear'd in the World; I know but of one thing can be urg'd to take off the ſtrength of what hath been hitherto ſaid; and that is, that the Primitive Chriſtians might probably take up this Cuſtom of thus ſigning themſelves, becauſe they liv'd wholly amongſt the Enemies of the Croſs of Chriſt, the *Jews making the Croſs a Stumbling-block, and the Greeks Fooliſhneſs.* So that, their deſign of doing it, was only to bear

bear their Testimony to the Faces of both, that is, tho the Cross was scandal to the one, and scorn and laughter to the other, yet they would not be ashamed of this Cross but made it the Badg of their Profession. Whereas we live in an Age and Nation, where (thanks be to God) there seems no such occasion, because Christianity is the Religion we openly and universally profess.

To this I answer, that this Objection being thus made, doth at least suppose the usage of the Cross not to be a thing that is in it self evil, because if so, no good end or design in using it could hallow the Action; so that the Ceremony is not Evil in its self, but that upon some weighty reasons, it might be brought into the Church, if so, then we might reasonably think, that the injunction of Authority in this Case, might Justifie the Practice of it. But much more, if the reason now alledg'd might be a just occasion for the Church in its first Ages to take the usage up, God knows the occasion may be as urgent still upon an Equally sad account: and that is, the Prophane and Atheistical Contempt that is thrown, not so much upon the *Sign* as the *Doctrine* of the Cross, by the pretended Wits of our Age. He hath a very slender concernment for the interests of Religion, that is not sensibly toucht with those Blasphemous Railleries he may every where meet with, upon the whole Scheme of Christianity, especially that which we make the great Foundation of our hopes and trust, *viz.* the Merits of our Saviours Cross and Passion. That the use of this Sign, if ever it was reasonable upon such a score as this, it is so now. And St. *Cyprians* Caution is strong and pertinent enough at this time of the day against all the Wit and Pride of the daring and haughty Atheist, *Muniatur frons*, &c. *Arm your Foreheads that the Seal of God may be kept safe.* q. d. *Remember the Badg you took upon you in Baptism,*

Epist. 56. ad Thiberitanos.

tiſm, and ſo long as you have that upon your Foreheads, never be aſham'd or laught out of Countenance, as to the Memory of your Saviours Love, and the Foundation of your hopes lay'd in his Death and Paſſion.

And now, ſince it is ſo evident how Ancient a practice this hath been in the Chriſtian Church: I would not have this part of the Argument pretended further than it was firſt deſign'd, which was only to ſhow that this Ceremony hath nothing owing in it to that which we call *Popery*, becauſe it was eſtabliſht in the Church ſo long before that *Myſtery of Iniquity* had its being. And tho through the Antiquity of it (if warrantable at the firſt) it becomes ſo much the more Venerable, and might juſtly lay ſome reſtraints upon the modeſt Chriſtian in his Cenſures againſt it; yet doth not this put it beyond the degree of an *indifferent Ceremony*, without which, the Sacrament of Baptiſm is declar'd by our *Church* as complete and perfected. Did the Antiquity of its practice make it neceſſary, it might prove as neceſſary almoſt in every Action of Life, as well as Baptiſm, becauſe (as I have noted before) *Tertullian* tells us, it was once ſo uſed. No, it only gives us the warrant of doing it, becauſe practis'd in the moſt incorrupt Ages of Chriſtianity; and the neceſſity of keeping it ſtill in uſe, lyes not ſo much in that it was the Cuſtom of ſome Church, or Conſtitution of ſome Council in former days, as that it is the Cuſtom of our Church now, and the appointment of our Governours. But,

Secondly, It is further conſiderable, that the uſe of the Croſs as it is ordain'd and appointed in our *Church*, hath not the leaſt affinity with the uſe of it, as it is in the *Romiſh Rituals*.

1. We do by no means allow any viſible Images of a Crucifi'd *Jeſus*, ſo as to have the leaſt concern in any part

part of our Worſhip. There is no mention of them in our Rubrick; there is hardly in any writings of the Doctors of our Church one paſſage to be found of that latitude, that Mr. *Baxter* amongſt his calmeſt thoughts hath not adventur'd to ſay, that is, that a *Crucifix well befiteth the Imagination and Mind of a Believer*; nay further, that it *is not unlawful to make an Image* (and gives the inſtance particularly of a *Crucifix*) *to be the objectum vel medium excitans ad cultum Dei, an Object or medium of our conſideration, exciting our minds to Worſhip God.* The ſenſe of our Church is truly expreſt in this matter by Mr. *Hooker*, who tells us that *between the Croſs which Superſtition honoureth as Chriſt, and that Ceremony of the Croſs which ſerveth only for a ſign of Remembrance, there is as plain and great a difference, as between thoſe brazen Images which* Solomon *made to bear up the Ciſtern of the Temple, and that which the* Iſraelites *in the Wilderneſs did adore.* Or *between thoſe Altars which* Joſias *deſtroy'd, becauſe they were Inſtruments of meer Idolatry, and that which the tribe of* Reuben *with others erected near the River* Jordan *to far other purpoſes.* Ours is no other than a meer tranſient, or (as others expreſs it) *aerial* figure of the Croſs, which comes not within the wideſt notion of an *Image*; or if it were ſo, is ſo very tranſient, that it abides not ſo long as to be capable of becoming any *Object or medium of Worſhip*, any further than any words we uſe in Worſhip may do.

Chriſtian direct. Eccleſiaſtical Caſes qu. 113. *p.* 875. *Ibid. p.* 876.

Eccleſ. Pol. l. 5. *p.* 348.

2. The uſe even of this tranſient ſign, bears no kind of Conformity or likeneſs with the uſe of it in the *Church of Rome.* They uſe it upon numberleſs occaſions beſide Baptiſm. If they enter in, or go out of Church, or a Friends Houſe; when they ſay their Prayers, or are preſent at any Religious Solemnity. If ſtartled at Thunder, taken in a ſtorm, frighted with a ſpectrum, or are ſur-

priz'd

priz'd with any kind of Fear or Aſtoniſhment, they bleſs themſelves ſtill, and take refuge under this ſign of the Croſs, which they will make upon themſelves. If they viſit the ſick, adminiſter the extreme Unction, or indeed perform any of their other *Sacraments* (ſo call'd by them,) the tranſient ſign of the Croſs muſt begin and cloſe all. But then, in the Sacrament of Baptiſm, the uſe of *this ſign is* ſo exceedingly different, as well in the nauſeous Repetitions of it before and afterward, in the Forehead, in the Mouth, and upon the Breſt: as alſo, the Monſtrous Significations according to the divers places whereon it is impreſt, that nothing can be more. Beſide that it is not us'd at the *time*, nor with the *form of words* that we uſe it with. So that, there is not the leaſt agreement betwixt us and them, either in the uſe, or in the ſignificancy of this Ceremony; and ſo no reaſonable offence can be taken at it, upon any Symbolizing of *ours* with the *Church of Rome* in it. All this might be further confirm'd by giving a particular view of the *Roman Ritual*, as to what reſpects their office for Baptiſm; but this is done by a better hand upon another *Caſe* of this kind.

See Caſe about the Ch. of Engl. Symbol. with the Ch. of Rome, p. 10. 11. 12.

Laſtly, Although it cannot be deny'd but the *Church of Rome* hath greatly abus'd this Ceremony to very ill purpoſes of Superſtition, yet doth not this make it unlawful to continue the reform'd uſe of it amongſt us, that have profeſſedly ſeparated from the Corruptions of *that Church*. It is a Principle that ſome of our *Brethren* imagine they are very well fortify'd in, from ſome inſtances in the *Old Teſtament*, viz. that whatever hath been abus'd to Idolatrous or Superſtitious purpoſes, ſhould *eo nomine* be aboliſht. But perhaps they would find this much more a queſtion than they have hitherto preſum'd, if they would conſider, that if this Principle were true,

it would go nigh to throw a ſcorn upon all or moſt ſo the Reformations that have been made from the *Church of Rome*, for they do not ſeem to have govern'd themſelves by this Rule. Some of them in their publick Confeſſions declaring, that they might lawfully retain ſuch Rites or Ceremonies as are of advantage to Faith, the Worſhip of God, or Peace and Order in the Church, *though they had been introduc'd by any Synod, or Biſhop, or Pope, or any other.*

Confeſſ. Bohem. Art. 15.

It is a Principle that would render Chriſtianity impracticable, becauſe no Circumſtance, no Inſtrument, no Miniſtry in Worſhip, but may have been ſome way or other abus'd and deſecrated by *Pagan* or *Romiſh* Idolatries. It would make every Garment of what ſhape, or of what colour ſoever, unfit for uſe in our Religious ſervices: for, not only the White, but the Red, the Green, and the Black, have been us'd (even for the ſignificancy of their reſpective colours) by the *Gentile*, or the *Romaniſt* to very ſuperſtitious purpoſes in divine Worſhip. It would condemn the Practice of thoſe very Perſons that would pretend this to be their Principle. For they have few of them carry'd it to that height as to aboliſh *Churches*, *Fonts*, or other *Utenſils*, but have thought fit to make uſe of them in the ſame ſervices of Religion as formerly, though not in thoſe modes by which they were abus'd to Superſtition and Idolatry. All which they ſhould not do, if either the Principle had any real Foundation in it ſelf, or they acted in any due conſiſtency with the Principle they pretend.

That which our *Diſſenting Brethren* urge, (as they think) of the greateſt force and pertinency in this matter, is the example of *Hezekiah*, who when he found *the brazen Serpent*, which God himſelf had directed to be ſet up for the Healing of thoſe that had been ſtung with

Fi-

Fiery Serpents, abus'd to downright Idolatry: He would not endeavour to recover it to the firſt deſign of its preſervation, that is, to keep it ſtanding only as a memorial of Gods Power and goodneſs, who had done ſuch great and beneficial things amongſt them by it: but without any more ado, takes it away from all further view of the People, breaks it in pieces, and calls it *Nehuſhtan*, i. e. let's the People ſee it was *a thing of Braſs* and nothing elſe. 2 *Kings* xvi. 1. 4.

To this I anſwer, Firſt, Although it is very natural to mankind to govern themſelves more by example than precept, yet, Arguments fetcht from examples, generally are not the trueſt way of reaſoning; and that partly upon this very account, namely, the proneneſs we have toward example, and Byaſs and Prejudice we may the eaſilier be drawn away with, upon that account. But chiefly, becauſe in alledging examples, it is very rare that we can hit the Caſe perfectly right. It may be ſaid of *Examples*, as it is of *Similitudes*; they ſeldom do *Currere quatuor pedibus*, they do not perfectly reach the thing intended to be prov'd, but are ſo widely different, or defective in ſome one or other Circumſtance, that there is not that parity of Reaſon that ought to be; and the varying of Circumſtances may much alter the Caſe. Which very thing apparently falls out in this very inſtance. For certainly, if the example be concern'd in any thing with reſpect to our practice, it may ſeem to prove nothing further than the neceſſity of taking away (not what hath been us'd only to Idolatrous purpoſes, but) what it ſelf hath been, and at that inſtant is, a meer Idol. This was the Circumſtance of the *brazen Serpent*, it was by Cuſtom become a real Idol; it had been ſo for a long time, was ſo at that inſtant, when *Hezekiah* brake it to pieces: *to thoſe days the Children of* Iſrael *did*

burn Incenſe unto it. So that, thus far perhaps this inſtance might affect us, that, were there any *Crucifix*, or material image of our Saviour upon the Croſs, now ſtanding, to which People for ſome Ages had given, and for the generality did ſtill give divine honour; it would then indeed concern the Government, in their Reformation from the Idolatries of the *Church of Rome*, to take away and aboliſh *this* and all other *Images* of this kind. This perhaps anſwers the pattern pretty much, and copieth out *Hezekiah*'s wiſe and good Action; and this accordingly is entirely done in *our Church*; there being no ſuch *Image* abiding now amongſt us, to which any adoration is publickly avow'd, or that can be pretended to have ſuch ſnare in it, as to hazard any general Idolatry. What proportion doth our *Aerial ſign of the Croſs* (toward which there is no intention, nor indeed any poſſibility of giving any divine Worſhip,) what proportion doth this bear to the material figure of the *brazen Serpent*, to which they had for a long time actually *burnt Incenſe*, did it *to thoſe very days*, and gave ſuch Evidence of their Inveteracy in Idolatry, that there ſeem'd no moral likelihood of preventing it by any other courſe than breaking the *Idol* to pieces, and letting them ſee what a meer *lump of Braſs* they had been Worſhipping? But then,

2. If Example were a good way of Arguing, we find by *Hezekiah*'s practice in other things, he did not think it an indiſpenſible Duty in him to aboliſh every thing that had been made uſe of to Idolatry, if they did not prove an immediate ſnare at that time; for, as to Temples which *Solomon* had erected for no other end but the Worſhip of falſe Gods in them, 1 *Kings* 11. 7. *Hezekiah* did not make it his buſineſs to deſtroy them, as being in his time forlorn and neglected things, of which no bad uſe was then made.

made. Although indeed King *Joſiah* afterward (probably upon the encreaſe of Idolatry, and renewed uſe of thoſe places) foued it expedient to lay them wholly waſte. 2 *Kings* 23. 13.

And thus much I have thought fit to ſay as to that firſt Head of Objection againſt the ſign of the Croſs, as it is cry'd out againſt as *a Relick of Popery*, and had been ſo deprav'd by the Superſtitious uſe of it in the *Church of Rome*. I cannot but acknowledg this to be the weakeſt part of their plea againſt it; and probably *our Brethren* know it to be ſo too: yet, becauſe it is moſt affecting amongſt common People, and ſeems to have made the deepeſt impreſſion upon thoſe that are not ſo well fitted for profound and ſolid reaſoning, I have choſen to be the larger here, that even the meaneſt capacities may ſee that the Sign of the Croſs, as we uſe it, was not introduc'd by the *Church of Rome*, but was of a much ancienter date: That the uſe we make of it bears no Conformity at all with *that Church* in their uſing it: that by our different uſage we keep at a ſufficient diſtance; nay, perhaps are in leſs likelyhood of falling into the Snare of their Communion, than if it had been utterly aboliſht: In a word, that that very Principle, upon which the charge of *Popery* is laid as an Argument againſt the Croſs, is it ſelf weak and fallible; nor are we bound by any Precept or Example in Holy Writ, to throw off the uſe of any one thing meerly becauſe the *Church of Rome* hath abus'd it. It hath prov'd a mighty inconvenience to the Church, that People have been thrown into ſo precipitant a Zeal of removing themſelves to the utmoſt extreams from the *Church of Rome*, that they have been almoſt afraid to determine in any action or circumſtance of Divine Worſhip, leſt it ſhould ſome way or other, have been Prophan'd and made unwarrantable by their practice.

This

This is that gave rise to the mischievous Enthusiasms in *Germany*, that ended in such bloody and barbarous Practises, as well as sensless and ridiculous Principles taken up and maintain'd by the Anabaptists there. I am loth to mention the horrid confusions of our own Age and Nation, which yet perhaps we were wrought up into by this very humour; I mean, a restless fondness for some additional refinements still, which our *Church* had not thought fit to make.

I cannot but inwardly reverence the Judgment, as well as love the Temper, of our first Reformers, who in their first Separations from *Rome*, were not nice or scrupulous beyond the just reasons of things. Doubtless they were in earnest enough, as to all true Zeal against the Corruptions of *that Church*, when they seal'd the well-grounded offence they took at them, with their warmest bloud; and cheerfully underwent all the hardships that Primitive Christians signalized their Profession with, rather than they would intermix with *Rome*, in any usage of Worship, or Article of Faith that had the least savour of Idolatry, Superstition, or false Religion at all in it. And yet these Holy and Wise Men, when they had the Power and Opportunity of Reforming, wholly in their Hands, being equally jealous of *Enthusiasm* as they were of *Superstition*, would not give themselves up to those *fantastick Antipathies* as to abolish this or that Ceremony, meerly because it had been in use amongst the *Papists*, if some other very substantial Reason did not put in its claim against it. And verily, had they not Governed themselves in these temperate and unbyast methods of Reformation, they would not so easily have justified themselves to their Adversaries, or the World; or have made it so evident (as by their wise management they did) that what was done by them was from the meer

mere urgencies of Conſcience and Reaſon, andnot the wantonneſs of Change and Innovation. So that, where any mean honeſtly (as I doubt not but many of thoſe do, that Diſſent from us in this particular circumſtance of the Croſs in Baptiſm) they ought to have their Reaſon very well awake, that the meer charge of *Popery* upon any diſputed point, may not ſo prejudice them in their enquiries into things as to leave no Room for debate and mature Conſideration.

Secondly, The other head of Objection againſt the ſign of the Croſs in Baptiſm is, *that it ſeems the introducing of a new Sacrament, which having not the warranty of our Lord and Maſter Chriſt Jeſus, muſt needs be a very offenſive invaſion of his Rights, whoſe Royal Prerogative alone it is, to inſtitute what Sacraments he pleaſeth in his Church.*

This Objection ſeems to point at a twofold argument. The one, with reſpect in Common to all thoſe Circumſtances in Worſhip, which for *Decency* and *Order*, are appointed by the Governours of the Church, but not antecedently preſcrib'd and enjoyn'd in the word of God. For, to do this, our *Diſſenting Brethren* have generally affirm'd it a bold and unwarrantable intruſion upon our *Lord and Maſter*, who was *faithful to him that appointed him, as alſo* Moſes *was faithful in all his Houſe*, that is, in preſcribing to the *Jews* all their modes and uſages in Worſhip, from which they were not to vary or deviate, to add or diminiſh in any one Circumſtance.

This I ſhall take no further notice of, than as it may neceſſarily intermix it ſelf with the queſtion particularly in hand about the *Croſs in Baptiſm*, partly becauſe I would keep as ſtrictly as may be to this diſtinct *Caſe*, and eſpecially, becauſe this Caſe [of doing nothing in or about the Worſhip of God, but what is expreſly preſcrib'd

scrib'd and appointed by *him* in his word] hath been another's province; so that, I shall only say, the Customs of the Jewish Church it self, (which *our Brethren* would make their main instance in this matter,) do make directly against it. They did unquestionably take up some usages wherein *Moses* had given no antecedent directions, which yet it is evident were not unlawful upon that account, because our *Blessed Lord* did not only not blame or accuse them of Encroachment or Superstition, but *himself* practis'd & comply'd with them; this, amongst many other things, hath been clear'd up in the instance of their Synagogue Worship, and upon another occasion may be further insisted on by and by. Besides, it is plain, this was no Rule amongst the primitive Christians in the first ages of the Gospel, not to add, the inexpediency and unfitness of this Rule to the very Oeconomy and Dispensation of Christianity, which was to diffuse it self amongst all Nations, and all kinds of People, who did so infinitely differ from one another, both in their Customs, and in the Significations of those Customs too, that it must have been a vast and bulky *digest* of Laws indeed, that must have suited all Countries, were every Circumstance and Punctilio in divine Worship to have been antecedently prescrib'd. All this hath been with so much clearness made out by several Hands, that I am apt to think at this time of the day, *our Brethren* do not expect or stand in need of further Conviction in this point, and seem in some measure agreed that this Position of theirs will not hold water.

It is the other part of the Objection therefore, that will fall more directly under our consideration at this present; and that is, that our using the *sign of the Cross* in Baptism, doth seem to run into the nature of a *new Sacrament*. And this is that they mean, when they tell us,

Sacrament. And this is that they mean, when they tell us, *it is an outward Viſible ſign of an inward inviſible Grace, whereby a Perſon is dedicated to the Profeſſion of, and Subjection to the Redeemer.* That it is *a dedicating means to conſecrate us to God*; that it *ſignifies our covenanting engagement, and is as a Badg and Symbol of the Chriſtian Religion*; that it *repreſents Chriſt dying on the Croſs, and ſignifies our being liſted under Chriſt*; that it is *an adaition to Baptiſm*; that it *adds another Sacrament to Baptiſm: And that it is uſed as an engaging Sign, in our firſt and ſolemn covenanting with Chriſt, and the duties whereunto we are really oblig'd by Baptiſm, are more expreſly affixt to that aery Sign than to the Holy Sacrament.* With many other Expreſſions of this kind, which we may find interſpers'd in the ſeveral writings of the Nonconformiſts, where they take occaſion to diſpute this Ceremony. This of the Croſſes *having at leaſt the ſemblance of a Sacrament*, is indeed the only Objection the *Presbyterian Brethren* inſiſt upon in their *exceptions againſt ſome paſſages in the preſent Liturgy.*

As to this therefore, firſt, I muſt needs ſay, I have ſometimes wonder'd that the word *Sacrament* it ſelf, hath been ſo well agreed upon amongſt us. The *Fathers* have us'd it ſo much at large in their writings that it would ſometimes be difficult to underſtand what they mean by it: and *our Brethren*, upon the ſame reaſons by which ſeveral other exceptions have been made, might have diſallow'd and rejected it as a *word* by no means *Scriptural*, but *Pagan* and *Heatheniſh.* However, ſince by a long reception of the *word* into the Church, it ſeems agreed on all ſides, what the Senſe and Acceptation of it ſhould be; my buſineſs will be to ſhew, 1. What we are agreed in as to the Notion of a *Sacrament*, and then 2. to make it plain, that as *our Church* never did deſign or

intend, by the uſe of the *Croſs* in Baptiſm to make any *new Sacrament* of it; ſo, in the nature of the thing, it hath not any *ſemblance of a Sacrament*, according to the Notion of a *Sacrament* that both ſides are agreed in.

Firſt, As to our being agreed in the Notion of a *Sacrament*, I muſt preſume *our Church* in her publick catechiſm, hath given that definition of it, which no reformed Church, but approves and allows of. That is, that *it is an outward and Viſible Sign of an inward and Spiritual Grace given to us, Ordain'd by Chriſt himſelf, as a means whereby we receive the ſame, and a Pledg to aſſure us thereof.* It is true, the *Aſſembly of Divines* in their larger Catechiſm do in that queſtion of their's [*what is a Sacrament?*] put in an expreſſion or two, that point at ſome Opinions, wherein they may be no more agreed amongſt themſelves, than they are with ſome of our Church. But then, in their next queſtion [*what are the parts of a Sacrament*] they give us the ſame account with that of our Church-Catechiſm, only a little vary'd in the words, *viz. The parts of a Sacrament are two, the one, an outward ſenſible ſign uſed according to Chriſts own appointment: the other, an inward and ſpiritual Grace thereby ſignifi'd.* by all which it is evident, we are well enough agreed in the Common acceptation of the word *Sacrament*. And therefore,

Secondly, I proceed to ſhew, that as our Church never did deſign or intend, by the uſe of the Croſs in Baptiſm, to make any *new Sacrament* of it, ſo according to the common Notion wherein we are agreed as to the word *Sacrament*, there is not *any ſemblance of a Sacrament* it can juſtly be charg'd with.

And here I might, not without ſome reaſon, inſiſt, that as we are agreed in the Definition of a *Sacrament*, that both the *outward Sign* muſt ſignifie an *inward Spiritual*

tual Grace, and alſo muſt have its *expreſs inſtitution* and *appointment from Chriſt*, we, that never ſuppos'd the uſe of the Croſs in Baptiſm could confer Grace, nor have ever made the leaſt pretext to any Divine appointment for it, ought not to be charg'd as introducing a *new Sacrament*, when it hath no pretenſions to any one thing that is of the Eſſence of a Sacrament. But I am willing to follow the Argument as they have laid it. They ſay therefore, that however, we do not call or account it an *Holy Sacrament*, yet foraſmuch as we bring a Ceremony into the Church, which in the Significations of it ſeems *tantamount* to a Chriſtian Sacrament, we do thereby uſurp the Prerogative of our great Lord and Maſter, , *ſetting up our Poſts againſt his Poſt, and our Threſhold again his Threſhold.*

This they ſay we do partly, 1. as we make the Croſs a ſign betokening our Faith, and Chriſtian courage, when in applying it to the Baptis'd Perſon, we ſay we do it *in token that hereafter he ſhall not be aſham'd to confeſs the Faith of Chriſt Crucifi'd*, &c. And partly 2. when by an intire Repreſentative of *our Church* it is determin'd, that by the ſign of the Croſs, the Baptis'd Perſon is *dedicated to the ſervice of him that dy'd upon the Croſs.*

Firſt, they ſay that by making the ſign of the Croſs *in token that hereafter*, &c. we apply ſuch Significations to it, that run it into the nature of a Sacrament, uſing it as *an outward Viſible ſign of an Inward Spiritual Grace.* As to this, we muſt ingeniouſly confeſs, that we make uſe of no Rite or Ceremony in *our Church*, but it is with this deſign, that it ſhould be Significant of ſome thing or other. It would be an odd piece of pageantry indeed, to uſe this or that geſture or action in our Religious ſervices, that ſhould have no Signification at all in it, and to account it therefore *Innocent*, becauſe it were *Im-*

pertinent. It is the Significancy of it, that makes it useful or proper, and if there were nothing of that in it, it would be very disallowable. But then, though our Ceremonies are significant, and any of them us'd as Memorative Signs to put us in mind of any *Duty* or Obligation toward God, they are not therefore *an outward Visible sign of an inward Spiritual Grace*; that is, they are not in the nature of any seal or assurance from God of *his Grace* to us, but hints and remembrances of some Obligation *we* are under with respect to God. And that this kind of significant usages have been all along arbitrarily taken up, without any Imputation of *introducing a new Sacrament*, may be made out, both from the practice of the *Jewish Church*, notwithstanding the punctual prescriptions deliver'd to them by *Moses*. From the practice of the *Christian Church*, and that, both in the very first ages of it, and also in all the later Reformations that have been made.

First, take we a view of the *Jewish Church*; and herein,

1. We may observe that in their very *Passover*, about which, both thing and Circumstances, they had such express directions by *Moses* before they went out of *Egypt*; yet did they in some ages following considerably vary, not only in their time of keeping it, which having been originally appointed on the *Tenth*, they chang'd it to the *Fourteenth* day of the Month: but in the gesture too. In the first institution of it, they were *to eat it with their loins girded, their shooes on their feet, and staff in their hand*, and all as a token of the haste they were then in. This gesture of eating the Passover, it is not so certain how long it continu'd in the *Jewish Church* after their coming out of *Egypt*, as it is unquestionable it was chang'd into a *discumbing* posture (that is, a posture where-

wherein they took their ordinary meals) long before the days of our Saviour, and that so warrantably too, that our Saviour himself used it. And yet, this very posture they had taken up (if we will believe an Expositor that was no great friend to the Ceremonies of *our Church*) had its Signification too; for he tells us that they did it *in sign of their rest and security otherwise than they had in* Egypt. *V. Ainsw. in Exod. 12. 3.*

2. Another instance in the *Jewish Church* might be that of the *Altar of Witness*, which *Phineas*, after he had made a jealous enquiry upon, approv'd of, as a standing memorial that they on the other side *Jordan* profest the true God, had Relation to the other tribes, and a Right to the Service of God in the *Tabernacle of the Congregation*. *Josh. 22.*

3. But that which seems to come nearest us is what the Jewish Authors do frequently take notice of, and that is, that as to those whose Office entitled them to *the Anointing* (which by all that doth very evidently appear, were only *Kings* and *Priests*) although the *Anointing Oyl*, as to its confection and ingredients, and the manner of doing it (as one would think) were particularly enough prescrib'd by God; yet did the Jews amongst themselves bring in the use of a Significative sign in doing it, which seems no where disallow'd, or charg'd as an invasion of Gods Holy Institutions: this was, to Anoint the Heads of their *Kings* with the figure of a *Crown*, and their *Priests* with the figure of an *Hebrew* ג or the *Greek* χ. Not to add, that the *Synagogue Worship*, the *Rites of Marriage*, the *form of taking Oaths*, and the like, things that had great Significations in them, had not the express Institution of God for their warranty, and yet were well enough receiv'd in the purest times of the *Jewish Church*, and comply'd with by our Saviour himself. *Maimon. H. Melachim.*

Se-

Secondly, take we a view of the Christian Church, and that, both as to the first ages of it, and all the later Reformations that have been made. 1. We may observe even from the days of the Apostles themselves, the Church hath taken the Liberty of making use of one Rite or other that hath signifi'd things of greatest weight and moment, to instance in a twofold Custom primitively us'd amongst Christians, that lookt much more *Sacramentally* than our use of the Cross in Baptism, that is, the institution of them seem'd Apostolical, being frequently mentioned in their Holy writings; and they were immediatly annext to the Holy Eucharist, and in their Signification bore some analogy with what that Sacrament it self was in part the token and seal of, these were the *Holy Kiss*, and the *Agapæ* or *Feasts of Charity*.

The *Holy Kiss* was perform'd (as the best Writers generally conceive) after all other preparations, immediatly before they entred upon the Celebration of the *Lord's Supper*, and at the close and upshot of the whole Solemnity; from whence *Tertullian* gives it the term of *signaculum orationis*, the *Seal of Prayer*. This the Apostle is suppos'd to direct to, when he enjoyns the *Corinthians* to *greet one another with an holy kiss*. And this was kept up with that Reverence in *Tertullian*'s time, that he speaks as if the Service of the Publick Prayers were maim'd and imperfect, if it concluded not with *this kiss*. This was us'd *in token* of the mutual Communion and Fellowship that Christians had with one another, and the unfeigned reconciliation of their Minds, that they came with no inward heart-burnings against one another, being that great Christian Grace and Vertue, so much insisted upon in our Saviour's Gospel, and after that, by his Apostles made one great Evidence of the Professors having *pass'd from Death to Life*. And yet, that this custom had not its

Dr. Caves prim. Christ. part 1 *Chap.* 11. *p.* 346. 352.

1 *Cor.* 16. 20.

Quæ oratio cum divortio sancti osculi integra? Tert. de orat.

its Foundation in any *Divine Appointment*, but the voluntary use the Church made of it, seems agreed to on all hands; because afterward, it is not only prohibited by some Councils, but by an universal consent in all Churches, wholly laid aside, and grown out of all use.

Again, we may observe, as to that custom of the *Agapæ* or *Feasts of Charity*, which in the Apostles days probably were celebrated immediately before the *Lords Supper*, and in some Ages afterward, not till the *Holy Communion* was finished. But, whether they had them before, or after, it is certain they had great Significations in them, not only of Christians mutual Love and Communion; but also, of the equal regards that God and our Blessed Lord had, toward all sorts and conditions of Men; the poor as well as the rich, those of meaner degree and quality, as well as the high and noble, when they were all to eat freely together at one common meal. This the Apostle seems to point at, in the remarks he makes upon the disorders in the Church *at Corinth*, that in their Love-Feasts, *every one taketh before other his own Supper*, and so did *despise the Church of God*. And *those that had Houses to Eat and Drink in, sham'd those that had not*. Now, though this custom was hallowed by the practice of the Apostles, and had so great Significations in it, and was from the first, so annext to the *Holy Eucharist* that it always either begun or concluded it, and consequently lookt much more *Sacramentally*, than our *Sign of the Cross* in Baptism can be suppos'd to do; yet is it plain, by the universal disuse of it, in these later ages of the Church, that it self never was esteem'd any *Sacrament*.

1 *Cor.* 11. 20, 21.

I might further instance in the Ceremony of *insufflation*, or breathing upon the Person that was to be Baptis'd, call'd by one of the Fathers *an ancient Tradition*, which

Aug. de nupt. & concup. lib. 2. 29.

which they us'd as a sign of *expelling the Evil Spirit, and breathing into them the good Spirit*; this seem'd to signifie more the *Grace of God*, than *Duty of the Christian*, and yet not suspected as any Sacrament. Thus, the Baptized Persons stripping of his Garment in token that *he put off the Old Man which was corrupt according to his deceitful Lusts*, doth it not look full as *Sacramentally* as our Cross in Baptism? Yet we find it anciently practis'd without any jealousie of *invading the prerogative of Christ, in instituting Holy Sacraments*. To say no more, what think we of the *trine immersion* once accounted a pious usage in the Church, whereby the Person being thrice dipt or put under water, at the mention of each Person of the *Trinity*, was suppos'd to be Baptiz'd in the belief of that great Article. So *Tertullian* expresseth it, *Nam nec semel, sed ter ad singula nomina, in Personas singulas tingimur. We are dipped not once but three times, at each name, and so are Baptiz'd into the three Persons.* And besides this Signification of the *three Persons* by this threefold immersion, which *Tertullian*, and not only he, but St. *Ambrose* have mention'd; there are others of the *Fathers* that have suppos'd, the Death, the Burial, and the Resurrection of our Saviour, together with his being in the Grave three days, was signifi'd by this custom. And yet, was this so far from being accounted any *Sacrament* of it self, or a *Sacrament* within *that* of Baptism, that the Church hath thought fit to lay *Immersion* aside, for the generality; and the *threefold Immersion* much sooner, particularly in *Spain*, and that upon a reason that made the *single dipping* as significant as the *Trine* had been when it was in use, *viz*, to distinguish themselves from the *Arrians*, who had taken occasion from this *threefold dipping* in Baptism, to assert the three distinct substances, pretending a Testimony from the *Catholick*

Advers. Praxeam. Again, *in lib de Coron. milit,*

tholick Church by this uſage. Much ſuch a reaſon (by the way) the Reform'd Churches in *Poland* govern'd themſelves by, when in a general Synod they decreed againſt the Poſture of ſitting at the Lords Supper, becauſe *that Cuſtom had been brought in firſt by the Arrians, who, as they irreverently treat Chriſt, ſo alſo his ſacred appointments.* Which leads to a view of the Church in all its later Reformations. *Synod. Petricov. An.* 1578.

2. Is it not very evident, that in none of our later Reformations, nay even in thoſe of our *Diſſenting Brethren* themſelves, but they do in their moſt Religious Solemnities, ſome things that are very Symbolical; Actions that have great ſignifications in them?

1. There giving to every Baptiz'd Infant a new Name. which both they and we do call the *Chriſtian Name*; this ſeems to betoken *our being made new Creatures*, and *entred into a new State* or Condition of Life, which ſtill they ſeem to aim more expreſly at, in their general care to give the Child ſome *Scripture Name*, or ſome name that ſhould ſignify, ſome excellent vertue or Grace, ſome Religious duty owing to God, or ſome memorable benefit receiv'd from him. Here we have an *outward Viſible ſign*, and this too ſometimes of an *inward Spiritual Grace*, and yet this no more accounted a *new Sacrament*, or a *Sacrament* within *that* of Baptiſm, than we do our *Sign of the Croſs*; and indeed there ſeems juſt as much reaſon for the one as for the other, and no more.

2. Thoſe Arguments which ſome of our *Diſſenting Brethren*, have us'd in Plea for the poſture of *ſitting at the Lords Supper*, do ſhew, that beſides what they urge from the poſture wherein our Saviour himſelf celebrated it, they apprehend ſome *Significancy* in the geſture, that renders it more accommodate to that ordinance than any other; for, ſome of them plead for the poſture of *ſitting*, as being moſt properly a *Table-geſture* and doth beſt of

all expreſs *our fellowſhip with Chriſt, and the honour and priviledg of Communion with him as Co-heirs.* Now in this matter let us conſider; our Lord hath no where expreſly Commanded us to perform this Sacrament in a ſitting poſture; much leſs hath he told us that he ordain'd *this geſture* in token of our *fellowſhip with him*; ſo that, we ſee this *geſture of ſitting* (by the Tenor of their Argument) made *an outward Viſible ſign of an inward and Spiritual Grace*; and this, not from any antecedent expreſs inſtitution of Chriſt; which notwithſtanding, this *poſture of ſitting* is not accounted by thoſe that frame the Argument, any *new* or *additional Sacrament* to that of the Lords Supper.

3. Laſtly, Thoſe of the Congregational way have a formal Covenant, which they inſiſt upon, that whoever will be admitted into any of their *Churches*, muſt engage themſelves in; this is of that importance amongſt them, that they call it, the *Conſtitutive Form of a Church*, that which makes *any particular Perſon Member of a Church.* Yea, and (as another expreſſes it) that *wherein the Union of ſuch a Church doth conſiſt.* We will ſuppoſe then, *this Covenant* adminiſter'd in ſome form or other, and the Perſon admitted by *this Covenant* into an *Independant Church* declaring his conſent by ſome Action or other, ſuch as *holding up his Hand*, or the like. Let me ask them, What muſt they of *that Church* think of this Rite, or Ceremony of holding up the hand? will they not look upon it as *a token* of his conſent to be a Church-Member? Here then is an *outward Viſible ſign*, of What? of no leſs (according to their apprehenſion of things) than a perfect *new State and Condition of Life*; that is, of being embody'd in Chriſt's Church, engag'd to all the *Duties* and enſtated in all the *priviledges* of it. Will they ſay that this way of admiſſion, either the form of words wherein *their Covenant* is adminiſtred, or the Ceremony of

Apol. for Church-coven.

of *holding up the* hand, by which this Covenant is taken and aſſented to, was originally ordain'd by Chriſt? or do they themſelves eſteem *this* of the nature of a *Sacrament*? or did the *Presbyterian-Brethren*, in all their Arguments againſt this way, charge *them* with introducing a *new Sacrament*? So that, from all inſtances imaginable, both of the Jewiſh and Chriſtian Church, and that, both Primitive, and later Reformations; even from the particular practices of our Diſſenting Brethren, it is very Evident, how unreaſonable a thing it is, that though we ſign the baptiz'd perſon with the *Sign of the Croſs in token, that hereafter he ſhall not be aſhamed to confeſs the Faith Chriſt of Crucifi'd*,&c. We ſhould be accus'd as introducing a *new Sacrament*, or adding the *Sacrament* of the Croſs to *that* of Baptiſm.

But then, they tell us ſecondly, we ſeem to own it our ſelves, when in an entire Repreſentative of *our Church* (ſuch as we ſuppoſe a *Convocation* to be) it is actually determin'd, that by the Sign of the Croſs, the Perſon Baptiz'd *is dedicated to the ſervice of him that dy'd upon the Croſs*; and *what can be more immediate* (ſaith one of our Brethren) *than in the preſent dedicating act to uſe the ſign, and expreſs the dedicating Signification?* It is confeſt that the 30*th. Canon* doth ſay the *Croſs is an honourable badg, whereby the Infant is dedicated*, &c. And the ſtreſs of the Objection in this part of it lieth in the word *dedicated* that is, becauſe the Sacrament of Baptiſm is it ſelf a Seal of *Admiſſion* into Covenant, and *Dedication* to God, and the Chriſtian Religion; therefore, by uſing a Symbolical Ceremony of humane inſtitution, whereby we profeſs the Perſon Baptiz'd, *dedicated to the ſervice of him that dy'd upon the Croſs*, we have made a *new Sacrament*, and added to *that* of Baptiſm, to *dedicate* him in our own *invented* way as Chriſt hath in that which he hath *inſtituted*.

1. To this I answer, that surely the word *dedication*, is of a much larger Signification, than that it should be confin'd meerly to the Interpretation, that *our Brethren* would put upon it. The meaning of *dedication* properly is, *the appropriating of any thing or Person to any peculiar service*, such as a Church, or Temple for the Worship of God: any Person to the profession the true Religion, to the Ministry, or to any kind of attendance at the Holy Altars. This is the strictest sense of *dedication*; but then, in a larger sense we may suppose it apply'd to any strict or conscientious discharge of all the Duties, and answering all the ends of the *first dedication*. Thus, suppose a Man ordain'd to the Ministry, whereby he is properly *dedicated* to the work and service of the Gospel; he may by some solemn act of his own, *dedicate* himself to a zealous and faithful discharge of *that Office*; and this, after some time that he may have apprehended himself *hitherto* not so diligent in the trust that had been committed to him. This cannot be call'd in any sense a new ordination; but it may with reason and *sense* enough be stil'd a *dedicating* of a Man's self more particularly to the service of God, in the discharge of that Ministry he was ordain'd to. And therefore,

2. In this sense the Convocation ought in all justice to be understood, when they, in explaining the intention of the Cross, tell us, *it is an honourable badg whereby the Infant is dedicated to the service of him that dy'd upon the Cross*, &c.

And yet, I must needs say, it seems hard measure upon the *Church of England*, that if those in a *Convocation* should not have apply'd the word *dedication*, to what might be most strictly the sense of it, that this should be so severely expounded, that no other declarations of their meaning and intention must be accepted of, than what meerly the strict and critical sense of *that* word will

will bear. Surely there are many expreſſions in the *Fathers*, that may ſeem more diſtant from that ſenſe we are willing to take them in; and we ſhould be very loth to yield them up as the Authors or Defenders of ſome dangerous Opinions in the *Church of Rome*, becauſe ſome phraſes of theirs in the rigour of them, may be preſt to a kind of meaning that may ſeem to favour *them*. There is a neceſſary allowance to be given to ſome ſchemes of Speech, and meaning of words, or elſe we ſhould be in a perpetual wrangle and diſpute about them.

However, there doth not need even this ſort of Charity for this word *dedicated*, upon which ſuch weight of Argument hath been lay'd. For, as in all Authors it hath been variouſly uſed, ſo is it properly enough apply'd in *this Canon*, for the deſign for which it was uſed; and the declaration is plain and intelligible enough to the candid and unprejudic'd mind. The word *dedication* (as they uſe it) may properly enough ſignifie a *Confirmation* of our firſt *dedication* to God in Baptiſm, and a declaration of what the Church thinks of the Perſon Baptiz'd, what ſhe doth expect from him, and what Obligations he lieth under by his Baptiſm. And as a *medium* of this declaration, the ſign of the Croſs is made, being as expreſſive as ſo many words, what the Infant by his Baptiſm was deſign'd to; the Apoſtle himſelf having comprehended the *whole of Chriſtianity* under that term and denomination of the *Croſs*. Now that our Church did deſign this *declarative dedication* (by the uſe of this ſign) and none other, is very evident, in that, though the word *dedicated* is uſed in the explication of their ſenſe in *that Canon*, yet, do they there refer to the words uſed in the *Book of Common Prayer*. By comparing therefore the *Canon* and the *Office for Baptiſm* together (the *Canon* directing to the *Office*, and the *Rubrick* belonging to the *Office* directing to the Canon) we may obſerve what ſtreſs is to be lai'd upon

on the word *Dedicated* that is, how far they were from designing the same sort of *immediate dedication* that is made by Baptism, and yet how by *the Cross*, we may properly enough be said to be *dedicated* too.

As to the Sacrament of Baptism, we are all agreed that by *that* we are *dedicated* to the Service of Christ, and the Profession of his Gospel; Now the *Church of England*, both in the *Rubrick* and *Canon* do affirm and own, that the Baptism is complete, and the Child made a Member of Christ's Church, before the Sign of the Cross is made use of; or if upon occasion it should not be made use of at all. It is expressly said, *We receive this Child into the Congregation of Christ's Flock*, and upon that, *do sign it with the Cross*. So that the Child is declar'd *within the Congregation of Christ's Flock*, before the Sign of the Cross be apply'd to it. Beside, that *in the Office for private Baptism*, where the Sign of the Cross is to be omitted, we are directed *not to doubt, but that the Child so Baptiz'd is lawfully and sufficiently Baptiz'd*; the Canon confirming it, *that the Infant Baptiz'd is, by vertue of Baptism, before it be sign'd with the sign of the Cross, receiv'd into the Congregation of Christ's Flock, as a perfect Member thereof, and not by any power ascribed unto the sign of the Cross.*

If therefore, we be *dedicated* in Baptism, and the Baptism acknowledg'd complete and perfect, before or without the use of this Sign, the Church cannot be suppos'd ordaining so needless a repetition as this would be, to *dedicate* in Baptism, & then to *dedicate* by the Cross again, but that which they express by *dedicated by the Cross*, must be something very distinct from that *dedication* which is in Baptism; that is, the one is a sign of *dedication*, the other is the *dedication* it self, as distinct the one from the other, as the Sign of Admission is from Admission it self, and a signification of a priviledg, is from an Instituted means of Grace. It

seems

seems a thing decent and seasonable enough, that when it hath pleas'd God to receive a person into his favour, and given him the Seal of it, that the Church should give him *the right hand of fellowship*, solemnly declaring and testifying he is receiv'd into her Communion, by giving him the Badg of our Common Religion. So that, this is plainly no other than a Declaration the Church makes of what the Person Baptiz'd is admitted to, what engagement he lies under when capable of making a visible Profession. It expresseth what hath been done in Baptism, which is indeed not a *sign of Dedication* but Dedication it self, (as I have already said) as also the Cross is not *dedication* itself, but a *sign* of it. Which Declaration is therefore made in the name of the Church in the plural number, *We Receive this Child into the Congregation of Christs Flock, and do sign him with the sign of the Cross*, &c. Whereas, in Baptism, the Minister, as the immediate agent of Christ, by whom he is Authoriz'd and Commissionated, in the singular number (as in his Name) pronounceth it, *I Baptize thee in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.*

As to what is urg'd above, that *nothing can be more immediate, than in the present dedicating act, to use the sign, and express the dedicating signification*; they must know, it might have been *more immediate*, either to have plac'd this Sign before Baptism, or to have appointed some such form of words, in applying it as the *Church of Rome* doth; or if it had been pretended to be of divine Institution, and necessary to make the Sacrament of Baptism compleat and perfect.

And thus, I presume, I have run through the main debate betwixt *us* and our *dissenting brethren* as to this Case. Wherein, I hope, I have neither misrepresented their objections, nor let pass any material strength in them, nor in replying to them, used any one provoking or offensive word. Would they but read and weigh this and the other Discourses of this kind, with the same calmness of temper,

temper, and study of mutual agreement, wherewith (I dare say) they have been written; I cannot think there would abide upon their Spirits so vehement a desire for the removal of these things; but it might rather issue in a peaceable and happy closure in the use of what hath been made appear was so innocently taken up, and might with so much advantage, under the encouragement of serious and good Men, be still retained. I do not indeed think any of our Church so fond of this *Ceremony* particularly, but that, if the laying it aside might turn to as great Edification in the Church, as the serious use of it might be emprov'd to, our Governours would easily enough condescend to such an overture. Instances of this have been given in our Age; and our *Presbyterian-Brethren* in their Address to the *Bishops* do own, *that divers Reverend Bishops, and Doctors, in a Paper in Print, before these unhappy Wars began, yielded to the laying aside of the Cross, and making many material alterations*, &c. They have not those apprehensions of *these things*, that they are unalterable, and obligatory upon all Christians, as such; or that the laying them aside, for the bringing about some *greater good* would be offensive to God. I would to God, our Brethren, at least would but meet us thus far, as to throw off those *Superstitious* prejudices they may have conceiv'd against them, and think that as the laying them aside would not be displeasing to God, so the use of them cannot be so neither. Forgive the expression of *Superstitious prejudices*. For I must suppose we put too high a value upon *indifferent rites*, when we think that either the use or rejection of them will recommend us to God, unless there be other accidents of obedience or disobedience to Authority, that will alter the Case. Otherwise the Imagination we may have of pleasing or displeasing God in any of these things, must look like what the *Greeks* express Δεισιδαιμονία *Superstition* by, I mean, a *causeless dread of God*. It is a passage in *Calvin*, that it is *equally Superstitious, to condemn things indifferent as unholy, and to command them as if they were holy*. It is infinitely a nobler Conquest over our selves, a proper regaining that *Christian liberty* to which we are redeemed, and would be of far happier consequence to the Church of God, to possess our selves with such notions of God, and of indifferent things, as to believe we cannot recommend our selves to him in the least measure by scrupling what he hath interpos'd no Command to make them either Obligatory or Unlawful.

Except. & Pap. of the Presbyt. p. 31.

In 2 Præcept.

FINIS.

33333